



101 Montgomery St.
Suite 900
San Francisco, CA
94104
t: 415.495.4014
f: 415.495.4103

tpl.org

September 17, 2018

Angela Avery, Chief
Policy & Outreach Division
Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

Dear Angela,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) 5-Year Strategic Plan. The Trust for Public Land is grateful to see the inclusion of the Regional Goal of Strategic Lands Conserved and its associated Strategies. We continue to appreciate this recognition of the important role of land conservation in furthering the mission of the SNC to initiate, encourage and support efforts that “improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region, its communities, and the citizens of California.”

We would like to reiterate the primary comment we’ve presented throughout this process that while it is valuable to see Strategic Lands Conserved as an identified goal, the overall document still does not adequately recognize land conservation as a vital tool that contributes meaningfully to each of the Regional Goals. As a primary suggestion, we believe that the subtitle of this Plan should read **Protecting** and Restoring the Health and Resilience of the Sierra Nevada’s Watersheds and Communities. Strategies within other Regional Goals should then identify the ways that strategic conservation can further those goals.

Our minor comments are outlined below. The revised text is shown in underlined and bolded text.

Regional Goal: Healthy Watersheds and Forests (p.13)

The Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) itself notes the “important role that land conservation easements and acquisitions can play in enhancing the health of the Sierra watersheds,” Sierra Nevada WIP Regional Strategy updated March 2018, p. 13. Even if the WIP focuses on other activities, SNC notes on p. 8 of this draft Strategic Plan that the launch of the Strategic Plan and new funding to SNC have provided the opportunity to *expand* the WIP beyond forest health. The Healthy Watersheds and Forests Goal presents the opportunity for the SNC to expand from the WIPs initial funding-restricted focus to include activities such as conservation that further this goal. We therefore request that the goal’s subheading be changed on p. 13 to say: Restore **and protect** the ecological health and resilience of watersheds and forests within the Sierra Nevada Region.

Funding and Investments Strategy 3 (p.15): Distribute new bond funds for watershed and forest restoration **and protection** in a timely and strategic manner to achieve maximum positive impact, coordinating with other state and federal funding agencies. **Ensure the durability of these investments by encouraging and funding conservation easements (preferred) or long term management agreements for restored lands.**

Strategy 4 (p.15): Advocate for and secure increased funding for watershed **protection** and restoration work...

Under Regional Goal: Vibrant Recreation and Tourism, Funding and Investments Strategy 4: Advocate for and secure increased funding for sustainable recreation, tourism development, **and access to public lands** in the Region, including funding for the SNC and other agencies and organizations

Regional Goal: Strategic Lands Conserved (p.23)

We request clarification on the top p. 23 where SNC states “While not actively funding land acquisition” to read “**Even when SNC could not actively fund land acquisition**, the SNC has continued to support partner efforts to gain funding from other state and federal programs.” The language, as is, seems to suggest that SNC does not fund land acquisition.

Funding and Investments (p.23)

Strategy 2: Under the first bullet, we suggest the following change: Establishing and implementing a grant programs funding fee title and/or conservation easement acquisitions guided by the needs assessment and agency coordination.

Design and Field Test New Ways of Doing Business (p.24)

Strategy 4: Encourage the use of conservation easements as a tool to address climate change by encouraging conservation easements that are climate responsive. Provide funding for stewardship and monitoring to ensure and measure success.

We celebrate the ongoing partnership with SNC and the important work SNC is doing as a representative of the Sierra landscape and community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MBavinger', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Markley Bavinger
Sierra Program Manager

cc: Dave Sutton, The Trust for Public Land
Katherine Jones, The Trust for Public Land